

Milton-Halton Hills amalgamation goes too far: Serjeantson

• from SERJEANTSON on page 4 community.”

Halton Hills includes a number of hamlet developments such as Norval, Stewarttown and Limehouse as well as significant settlement areas in Acton and Georgetown, which are separated by several miles of farms.

“There are definitely separators. This area is not like Burlington or Oakville, where you can drive around and not know which community you are in,” she said, noting there is a better case for amalgamation in the south of Halton.

Ms Serjeantson admitted that with the number of vacant senior staff positions in Milton, if anytime was good to initiate discussions for amalgamation, this is it.

The towns currently have shared resources including fire protection, winter roads maintenance and a loose arrangement through Halton Hills’ purchasing department.

Ms Serjeantson reminded people that most Ontario amalgamations of municipalities are between towns or counties with small populations.

Milton with 34,000 people and Halton Hills with 44,000 are not that small she said.

Halton Hills has enough water to service an additional population of about 5,000 in Georgetown and another 2,500 in Acton. Currently the town is growing at the rate of

about 1,500 residents per year.

Ms Serjeantson said that there are several steps being taken to increase the water supply because of a strong resistance to drinking water from Lake Ontario.

Given that water will soon come to Halton Hills’ Highway 401 lands, bringing substantial commercial and industrial development, there will be pressures to develop a satellite city to serve that growth.

However Ms Serjeantson questions the wisdom of starting satellite growth rather than expanding the existing urban envelope. She said her council is considering a plan to share some facilities, perhaps an arena complex, with Milton and to build it in the Highway 401 area.

The plan is still in its infancy and no site has yet been evaluated but obviously it would have to suit both municipalities, she said.

“Amalgamation can cost a lot of money. With our arrangement we can share resources without a formal amalgamation,” she said.

Politicians from both municipalities have made lighthearted references to amalgamation in public comments regarding a fundraising slo-pitch game.

Ms Serjeantson said the game will give councillors from each town an opportunity to converse but said she does not expect amalgamation will come up.

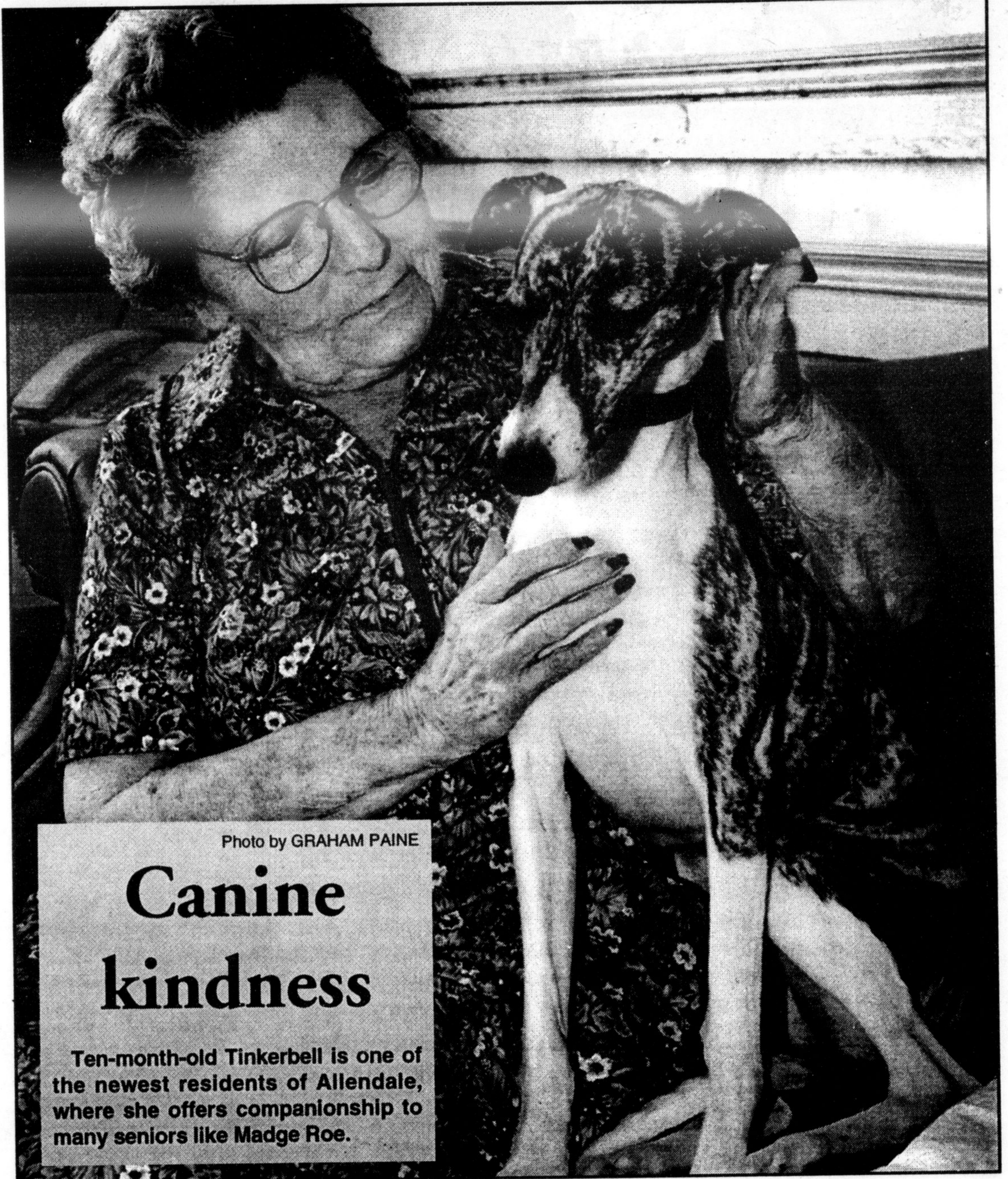


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